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**SWIMMERS AND BOATERS URGED TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS DUE TO POSSIBLE
HIGH WEEKEND SEAS**

FRAMINGHAM, MA – State officials caution boaters and swimmers to stay aware of surf conditions as the projected path of Hurricane Leslie is forecast to pass several hundred miles east of Massachusetts. Even at that distance, Hurricane Leslie is expected to have an impact on coastal regions with breakers in excess of 12-foot possible. Swimmers and boaters must take precautions given the potential high seas and strong currents expected to be associated with this event over the remainder of the week.

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) offers these tips for those around the water, particularly swimmers and boaters.

- Always check surf conditions.
- Swimmers should never swim alone, preferably on beaches with lifeguards. If you see someone in trouble, get help from a lifeguard. If a lifeguard is not available, have someone call 9-1-1.
- Always be aware of the dangers of rip currents. Remember to never swim against the current, but parallel to the beach to an area where the current is weaker and you can safely return to shore.
- Never turn your back to the ocean, as you may be swept off coastal bluffs or tide pool areas and into the water by waves that can come without warning.
- Be careful standing on seawalls while watching the surf.
- Besides the risk to swimmers and onlookers, swells entering some inlets and harbor entrances could cause tricky navigation for operators of small craft.
- Boaters should continually obtain the latest available weather forecast for your boating area as well as U.S. Coast Guard and Harbor Master warnings and directives.
- Identify hurricane holes and safe harbors in the area in case you are caught at sea.
- Boat owners should assemble emergency equipment and supplies, as well as all of the necessary gear on board to properly tie down their vessel.
- Realize that you may not be able to pull your boat out of the water. Precious time is lost if you are searching for gear as a storm approaches.

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- Have a plan worked out with your marina operator so there are no questions or confusion when the time comes to tie up or pull your boat from the water.
- Insure your vessel is as watertight as possible. Use duct tape and plugs to seal hatches, ports, windows, doors and vents.
- Remove all electronics, valuables and non-essential items.
- Have your insurance policies, boat registration, a recent photograph and description of the vessel, gear inventory, marina or storage lease agreement and important telephone numbers (local harbormaster, U.S. Coast Guard, National Weather Service, insurance agent) in a secure place off of the boat.
- When you are through, help your neighbor. It only takes one poorly tied boat in a marina to destroy an entire dock.
- Do not stay on the boat.

With National Preparedness Month and the Hurricane Season underway, it is a good reminder to take the proper steps to ensure your family's safety. Ensure that your Family Emergency Kit is stocked for a 3-5 day period, your Family's Communication Plan is in place, and you have become informed of your community's Emergency Plans regarding potential notification systems, emergency shelters and evacuation routes. For additional information regarding Hurricane Preparedness, go to the MEMA website at www.mass.gov/mema.

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the state agency responsible for coordinating federal, state, local, voluntary and private resources during emergencies and disasters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MEMA provides leadership to: develop plans for effective response to all hazards, disasters or threats; train emergency personnel to protect the public; provide information to the citizenry; and assist individuals, families, businesses and communities to mitigate against, prepare for, and respond to and recover from emergencies, both natural and man-made. Follow MEMA updates on *Facebook* and *Twitter*.